

The President. Yes, they are. Thank you for noticing. The couches—Mrs. Bush deserves a lot of credit.

Q. The rug?

The President. No, the rug is temporary. The rug will have the—we're in the process of weaving a new rug. And each President, as you probably know, since you've been around here some—well, a long time—each President designs his own rug. I've designed mine, and it's now being woven and will be here in about 3 months. And I look forward to—

Q. The Alamo up on the wall is not an indication of how you feel in the White House right now, is it?

The President. I feel great. Listen, I think we've had one of the most constructive first 6 months of any Presidency, and we're making great progress on a lot of issues. No, I've always—a dictatorship would be a heck of a lot easier; there's no question about it. But dealing with Congress is a matter of give and take. The President doesn't get everything he wants; the Congress doesn't get everything they want. But we're finding good common ground.

And I also want to remind you all, we're making great progress when it comes to fiscal sanity and the budget. I appreciate so very much the supplemental that got passed. I signed it in Kosovo. It was a supplemental that came out clean. And I thank the leadership in the Senate, particularly Senator Byrd, as well as those in the House—Congressman Young—for moving a clean supplemental. That was unheard of in recent history.

There's going to be some struggles over the budget, no question about it, as appropriators perhaps try to bust the budget. But they're going to find somebody who's going to hang tough on the budget. And I want to remind people that the reason some are struggling to find money to spend is because the economy has turned down. That's why. The budget projections are less than anticipated because of a slowdown in the economy. And by cutting taxes, we did the right thing to reinvigorate the economy. And do you know who knows that best? The American people.

Thank you for coming.

News Conference With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy

Q. You're not a dictator, but you are a conqueror. [Laughter]

The President. Well, I just hope it reflected in the stories. Actually, did you know that the guy, when questioned, the interpreter misinterpreted what he said. He said that it was clear to the American press that President Bush conquered the leaders, as opposed to conquering the American press. No one conquers the American press, of course. [Laughter]

Assistant Press Secretary Johndroe. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:23 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and President Vicente Fox of Mexico. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Earley. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Navajo Code Talkers

July 26, 2001

Thank you very much. Today America honors 29 Native Americans who, in a desperate hour, gave their country a service only they could give. In war, using their native language, they relayed secret messages that turned the course of battle. At home, they carried for decades the secret of their own heroism. Today we give these exceptional marines the recognition they earned so long ago.

I want to thank the Congress for inviting me here, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Senators Campbell, Bingaman, and Johnson and Congressman Udall for their leadership. I want to thank Sergeant Major McMichael—distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Washington, DC.

The gentlemen with us, John Brown, Chester Nez, Lloyd Oliver, Allen Dale June, and Joe Palmer, represented by his son Kermit, are the last of the original Navajo Code Talkers. In presenting gold medals to

each of them, the Congress recognizes their individual service, bravely offered and flawlessly performed.

With silver medals, we also honor the dozens more who served later with the same courage and distinction. And with all these honors, America pays tribute to the tradition and community that produced such men, the great Navajo Nation. The paintings in this rotunda tell of America and its rise as a nation. Among them are images of the first Europeans to reach the coast and the first explorer to come upon the Mississippi. But before all these firsts on this continent, there were the first people. They are depicted in the background as if extras in the story. Yet, their own presence here in America predates all human record. Before others arrived, the story was theirs alone.

Today we mark a moment of shared history and shared victory. We recall a story that all Americans can celebrate and every American should know. It is a story of ancient people called to serve in a modern war. It is a story of one unbreakable oral code of the Second World War, messages traveling by field radio on Iwo Jima in the very language heard across the Colorado plateau centuries ago.

Above all, it's a story of young Navajos who brought honor to their Nation and victory to their country. Some of the Code Talkers were very young, like Albert Smith, who joined the Marines at 15. In order to enlist, he said, "I had to advance my age a little bit." At least one Code Talker was overage, so he claimed to be younger in order to serve. On active duty, their value was so great and their order so sensitive that they were closely guarded. By war's end, some 400 Navajos had served as Code Talkers; 13 were killed in action, and their names, too, are on today's roll of honor.

Regardless of circumstances, regardless of history, they came forward to serve America. The Navajo code itself provides a part of the reason. Late in his life, Albert Smith explained, "The code word for America was, 'Our Mother.' 'Our Mother' stood for freedom, our religion, our ways of life, and that's why we went in." The Code Talkers joined 44,000 Native Americans who wore the uniform in World War II. More than 12,000 Na-

tive Americans fought in World War I. Thousands more served in Korea, Vietnam, and serve to this very day.

Twenty-four Native Americans have earned the highest military distinction of all, the Medal of Honor, including Ernest Childers, who was my guest at the White House last week. In all these wars and conflicts, Native Americans have served with the modesty and strength and quiet valor their tradition has always inspired.

That tradition found full expression in the Code Talkers—in those absent and in those with us today. Gentlemen, your service inspires the respect and admiration of all Americans, and our gratitude is expressed for all time in the medals it is now my honor to present.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. in the rotunda at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Sgt. Maj. Alford McMichael, USMC, who represented the U.S. Marine Corps.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

July 26, 2001

Eleven years ago today, people from across America gathered to celebrate the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), one of the Nation's most important civil rights laws since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA opened up the true promise of America to people with disabilities who, for far too long, have found impediments to getting an education, getting a job, or just getting around.

I am proud that my father saw the need for a comprehensive law to liberate the energies and talents of people with disabilities, and who worked with the Congress to make the ADA a reality.

Much has been accomplished in the past 11 years. Attitudes are changing and barriers are coming down all across America. Employers now provide a range of "accommodations" to ensure that employees with disabilities can keep their place in the wage-earning world, resulting in unprecedented economic opportunities. And, outside of the workplace,